

Ridout House
Annapolis
Anne Arundal County
Maryland

HABS No. MD 91

HABS

MD.

2. ANNA

10-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of Maryland

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

Addendum to

John Ridout House
120 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis
Anne Arundel County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-91

HABS
MD,
2-ANNA,
19-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ADDENDUM TO
JOHN RIDOUT HOUSE

HABS
MD,
2-ANNA,
19-

HABS No. MD-91

Location: 120 Duke of Gloucester Street, Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

Present Owner: Private.

Significance: The John Ridout House is a lovely example of eighteenth century Annapolis mansions. Its original owner, John Ridout, was secretary to Maryland Governor Horatio Sharpe, and later a member of the governor's council. Ridout and his wife, Mary Ogle, entertained George Washington in this house.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: c.1765.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement;

1. Architectural character: Built in the central area of the city of Annapolis, this was one of the outstanding eighteenth century mansions of the city. The decorative detail is so fine as to have been attributed to William Buckland, although the attribution is not confirmed.
2. Condition of the fabric: Both exterior and interior are in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: The two story house has a basement extending under the entire structure. The building, which is rectangular, 55' across, has a five bay front.
2. Foundations: The foundations are approximately five feet high at the main facade, and a full story on the garden facade. The lower section is of rubble with galleting; above the rubble section, the foundations are of brick with a molded water table.
3. Wall construction: The main and garden facades are of brick laid in all-header bond; the ends are of brick laid in Flemish bond. There is a brick stringcourse at the second floor level which extends around the entire structure, interrupted only by the chimney masses at the ends.
4. Structural System, Framing: Exterior walls and basement partitions are brick, load-bearing.

5. Porches: The entrance on the street facade is a pedimented wooden frontispiece with a modified Roman Doric Order and engaged columns.

Centered on the garden facade is a one-bay, one story pedimented porch with Roman Doric columns and tapered pilasters. A long straight flight of wooden steps descends to the ground.

6. Chimneys: Enormous chimneys project from each end wall, taking up most of the wall surface on the ground level and converging to single large chimney at each gable.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The front doorway is a double door; each leaf has four molded panels with raised fields. The doorway on the garden facade has two windows with hinged panels below. One of these doors is false.

b. Windows: Typical windows are double hung, nine lights over nine lights, with wide molded wooden trim inside the brick openings. A Palladian window is centered on the garden facade at second-story level; it is set in a half-dormer which interrupts the house cornice.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: A gable roof with slate shingles over older wooden shingles.

b. Cornice: A wooden cornice extends along the garden and street facades and returns several feet on the ends. The decorative schema is cavetto, ovolo, plain modillion course, corona, cyma reversa and cyma recta. The soffit is paneled between modillions.

c. Framing: There are four trusses of hewn timbers, supporting three rows of 3"x8" purlins on each side. 2"x3" rafters spaced 18" on centers carry spaced boards and wooden shingles. The trusses are complex: A 3½" x10" post supports each principal rafter near mid-span; from its base a diagonal strut extends out to the lower part of the principal rafter. Near the top of these posts there is a 3½"x10" horizontal member which connects the posts; from its center a king post and two diagonal struts meet the upper part of the principal rafters.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

a. Cellar: The cellar is divided into front and rear halves by a central partition.

b. First Floor: The first floor plan echoes the major division into two parts. The front half of the house contains a two-bay dining room on the southeast end, a single-bay front room on the northwest end, a stair and stairwell behind the northwest room and a two bay entrance hall between the two main rooms. The entrance hall and stairway are connected through a wide arched opening. The rear half of the house, facing the garden, contains a two-bay

Floor Plans (Cont'd)

library at the northwest end, and a three-bay drawing room at the southeast end.

c. Second Floor: The plan of the second floor is basically the same as that of the first.

2. Stairways: The main stair is an open-string stairway with rounded curtail steps, two turned balusters to each tread, plain brackets and a molded mahogany handrail. The treads are of yellow pine.

There is an enclosed stair to the attic, of yellow pine.

3. Flooring: Typical floors are of yellow pine boards which vary in width from 3 inches to 6 inches.

The basement is paved in brick and stone.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceiling are plastered, usually painted. The walls have molded wooden bases, dado rails and trim around door and window openings.

5. Decorative Features:

a. First Floor, Entrance Hall: Interior doorways have a paneled overdoor frieze which is crowned by a cornice with dentils. The jambs and soffits have molded panels with raised fields. The doors are yellow pine and have six molded panels with raised fields on one side. There are paneled interior shutters which retain some original hardware. A semi-elliptical arch with a molded archivolt and reeded key block spans the width of the stairway and is supported at each end by an enriched console.

b. First Floor, South Room (Dining Room): A fireplace with a marble surround and hearth and a wooden mantelpiece of mid-nineteenth century design is located against the southeast wall. The mantelpiece is characterized by a Doric colonette at each side, a plain frieze and molded mantel shelf.

c. First Floor, East Room (Drawing Room): Along the northeast wall (garden wall) are three windows; the opposite wall contains a central fireplace whose chimney is flush with the wall, flanked by a doorway on each side. There is an enriched plaster cornice with bed moldings characterized by a cavetto enriched with a row of four-petaled rosettes and an ovolo enriched with a row of leaves. There is an enriched modillion course with a rosette in each soffit area, corona, enriched cyma reversa, and cyma recta enriched with acanthus leaves. The walls have a paneled wainscot with moldings and raised fields which is interrupted by a slightly projecting pedestal at the center of the northwest wall. The window recesses extend to the floor and are treated with two vertical panels below the stool. The fireplace has a marble surround and hearth; the mantel is a shouldered wooden architrave with a frieze with fluted central and end tablets and a denticulated cornice.

d. First Floor, North Room (Library): The plaster cornice consists of a cavetto, ovolo enriched with egg and leaf, a plain modillion course with rosettes in soffit panels, corona, a small ovolo enriched with an egg-and-dart band and cyma recta. The walls of the room have molded wooden bases, plain plaster wainscoting and molded wooden dado rails. The windows have window seats. The mantelpiece is richly carved; it has a marble surround and hearth. There is a shouldered wooden architrave enriched with a rope molding and acanthus leaves. The frieze above the architrave is S-shaped in section and is enriched with carved acanthus leaves. At the center of the frieze is a flat projecting tablet ornamented with a painted floral swag of roses against a grey-green background.

e. Second Floor, East Room (Bedroom): This room has a plaster cornice and trim similar to that of the entrance hall. There is a fireplace with a marble surround and wooden architrave. The window reveals extend to the floor. The doors of the room have six molded panels. One door is equipped with a wood and wrought iron box lock, the other has a delicate brass box lock.

f. Second Floor, North Room ("Col. Sharpe's Room"): This room has the most elaborately developed treatment on the second floor. There is a plaster cornice consisting of a cavetto, dentil course, ovolo, corona of moderate projection, small cyma reversa and cyma recta. The walls are plaster-paneled above the dado rail. A fireplace with a slightly projecting chimney is centered on the northwest wall. It has a marble surround and hearth, a narrow molded wooden architrave, a pulvinated frieze with a plain central tablet, and a cornice with a fretted dentil course. There is an overmantel with a shouldered architrave resting on a low pedestal course; in each shoulder is a flower-and-leaf motif, rather like a vertically elongated rosette.

This room has three windows: one to the right of the chimney and two on the northeast (garden) wall.

g. Second Floor, South Room (Bedroom): This room has a plaster cornice similar to that of the room below, and a molded wooden base and dado rail. There is a fireplace on the southeast (end) wall which has a marble surround and hearth and a narrow wooden architrave.

h. Second Floor, Stair Hall: There is a semi-circular arched opening with wooden trim consisting of paneled pilasters, jambs, archivolt and molded key block.

i. Attic: The room at the northwest end is finished; it is plastered, has plain trim, and doors with four plain panels. There is a fireplace and a window in the gable between the flues.

The unfinished part of the attic is floored with boards 10" to 11" wide, and is lighted by the semi-circular head of the Palladian window.

j. Basement:

North Room: The room contains a large cooking fireplace at the northwest end. The opening of the fireplace is segmental arched, with an elliptical

Basement (Cont'd):

relieving arch above.

East Room: This room was finished with plaster, plain trim, base and chair railing, and may have been the servants hall.

South Room: This room has masonry walls and a modern concrete floor; it has planks and hooks in the ceiling for hanging meat.

Cellars: Two barrel-vaulted compartments lie under the entrance hall and the west section. The vaults are of brick in all-header and English bond. This area was formerly a necessary under the porch on the garden side of the house.

Prepared by:
Eleni Silverman
Historian, HABS

From a report by Harley J. McKee
N.P.S., Architect
Sept. 10, 1964